

Client success story

Project at a glance

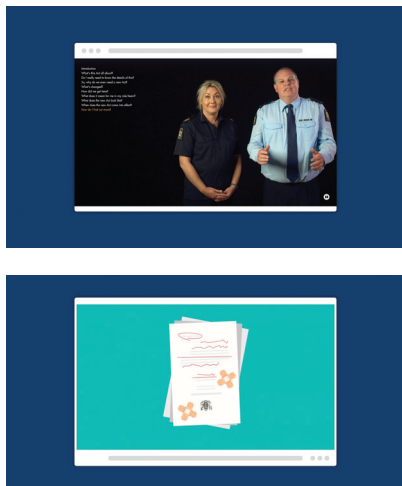
PROJECT: Customs and Excise Act Learning Programme

THE CHALLENGE: The Customs and Excise Act 2018 was a major legislative change that affected New Zealand Customs' 1200-strong workforce. Customs needed a learning campaign that would address the targeted needs of its operational staff while providing the flexibility and variety in learning options demanded by a widespread, shift-working and very busy workforce.

THE SOLUTION: a learning campaign.

KEY FEATURES:

- learning portal
- video
- interactive video
- workshops
- team briefing checklist
- online module



Company background



ABOUT THE CLIENT: New Zealand Customs' main purpose is to stop any dangers, hazards and threats from entering New Zealand. This includes anything that might threaten New Zealanders and their livelihoods.

WEBSITE: www.customs.govt.nz

AWARDS:

- Gold Winner - Best Learning Model (Blended) LearnX Live! Awards 2019



History/overview

The Customs and Excise Act (C&E Act) 1996, legislation that underpins the modus operandi for all New Zealand Customs employees, underwent a complete overhaul in 2018. The new C&E Act 2018 introduced a variety of changes in global business and technological trends, flexibility for future-focused requirements and subtle shifts in customer service.

Employees needed to be able to confidently perform their functions under the new legislation from the day the Act came into effect. This was a daunting prospect for an organization that had operated within the same legal framework for 20 years.

Initial Learning Needs Analysis revealed that the detail in knowledge and skills required varied significantly among different audience segments. Where Corporate and Support groups mainly needed to understand the intent, benefits and the potential impact of the Act on others, employees who'd deliver the Act's 'new services' needed comprehensive training on performing these functions.

Employees were also operationally widespread, shift-working and time-poor due to work commitments; each segment wanted to be served exactly what was necessary for them to function well. For anything additional, they wanted easy access so they could help themselves when required. Customs defined success as:

- high learning uptake and engagement
- consistent operations with confidence and competence
- maintenance of culture and employee satisfaction
- customer complaint levels kept at an appropriate level
- minimal disruption to business.

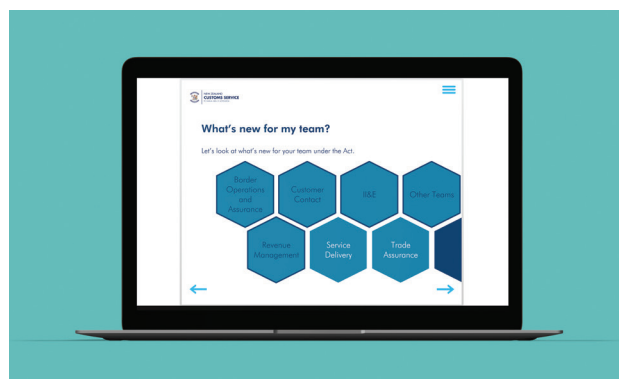
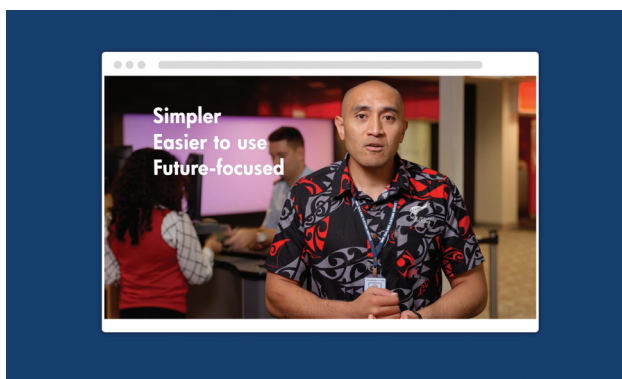
Design

Based on diverse audience needs, the program was rolled out in the form of a 'learning campaign' integrated across three phases.

PHASE 1 – ENGAGE AND INFORM: This scene-setting phase was aimed at building understanding and acceptance of the changes and delivered through a set of online interactive learning videos.

PHASE 2 – PREPARE AND IMPLEMENT: This phase focused on supporting the medium-to-high impact learner segments, using a combination of e-Learning, face-to-face workshops, quick-reference guides, leader-led briefings and mediated online forums. This included the identification and training of adequate numbers of champions to support medium-impact areas and in-depth training for all staff in the high-impact areas.

PHASE 3 – REVIEW AND ALIGN: This phase ran in the background throughout the rollout to review and update all existing learning materials (online and print) related to the C&E Act.



Measurable benefits/Key findings

The overall desired result of the Learning Program was that staff should be confident that they know and understand how to perform their new and changed functions and that Customs was able to operate under the new legislation effectively from day one. Qualitative feedback gathered from managers indicated they were happy with the level of staff confidence and preparedness. The reference-based approach (which did not saturate the learners with information) was successful and the learning portal resources enabled staff to continually refresh their knowledge and opened channels to obtain answers to any new questions that resulted.

The L&D team also received regular feedback from staff. They were very happy that the campaign pointed the learner to reference information, rather than saturating the learning with information during the learning event. This enabled staff to continually seek and refresh their knowledge, find out more or answer new questions that arose.

A further indicator that a seamless transition had taken place from the old Act to the new was identified as 'No noise'. This was defined as 'No problems or complaints from work areas about lack of support during training implementation. The implementation of the new Act would happen seamlessly, and without disruption to business as usual.'

KEY FINDINGS:

- Blended solution/learning campaign was a critical success factor: The cohesive, well-integrated learning campaign (hosted on the learning portal) meant that learners knew how all parts of the puzzle fitted together. Learners felt empowered to take charge of their own involvement, picking up their pace of learning as it suited them. Availability of media types catered for different learning styles/abilities.
- The smooth transition in the delivery between phases and the eventual 'No noise' outcome, with numerous accolades in feedback, has heralded what is thought to be a new culture of learning at Customs that is learner-driven.

Feedback

“The C&E Act learning programme was a multi-faceted initiative that became all the more complex and challenging due to the high priority and visibility from stakeholders across the organisation. There was a large group with diverse audience segments to satisfy; it had to be done simply and with minimal disruption to operations. It was brilliant to have Inspire as our learning partners. They helped us fulfil our vision of designing an innovative and versatile solution that eased the way forward for the implementation of the new Act.”

SONIA MANI, SENIOR LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT ADVISOR, NEW ZEALAND CUSTOMS